



Gather The Fragments Bible Mission

Stephen & Laura Holt

Sierra Leone, West Africa

FIELD NOTES: OCTOBER 2020

Greetings to our Family and Friends!

At this writing, I am packing for my return to Sierra Leone and am set to depart on November 9, arriving in Freetown on the 10th. While in Freetown, I will procure supplies then head for home on the 11th. Due to the emergency nature of this trip, I did not plan to stay long or schedule visits with supporting churches. To be honest, based on what the doctors had told our daughter, we all expected that I was coming back to a funeral. But praise the Lord, our son-in-law, Jeremy, is not only alive and well, but he started back to work earlier this month! The doctors and therapists have no explanation for his speedy and complete recovery, nor for his even being with us still. They can only say, and some have stated it plainly, that it was God. Medical science gave Jeremy all it had to offer and we are grateful for that; but God has other, better means! Our deepest thanks to all who prayed so fervently. We know prayer moves the heart of God and He was listening.

MEANWHILE, BACK IN SIERRA LEONE: I have been keeping in constant contact with the leading men of The Bible Mission Church and I am very happy to report to you that attendance has been quite steady and full following the lifting of Covid ban on gatherings. I had the pleasure of being in attendance for the first meeting following the removal of restrictions. What a joyous day that was, with extended singing and excellent preaching (see photos). Since my departure, church members have continued faithfully meeting, and we have even seen an increase in regular attendees!

Pastor Alfred Menjor has begun a monthly fast. It is held on the first Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of the month, concluding during our regular weekly prayer meeting. The purpose is twofold. First, for the unity of the brethren as we move forward in our building project. It is expected that we will begin the second phase of that project within the 2021-22 dry season. More on that topic later. The second purpose for the fast is to uphold the church family at The BIBLE Baptist Church of DeLand (our home church in the States) as they too move forward in their building project. We have seen an increase in faithful attendance at mid-week prayer meeting as a direct result of this cooperate fasting.

DRY SEASON CIRCUIT: As you may recall from our April, 2020 Field Report, our dry season circuit was abruptly cut short due to the Covid-19 virus. This was most discouraging to Moses and me as we had worked very hard to construct our biggest circuit to date, including many new contacts in new regions and provinces. I have been in constant contact with Moses Menjor (Mojo), who is my right-hand-man, as he begins working on our 2020-21 circuit season. Mojo is making calls and progressing with filling in our calendar. He is somewhat hampered by the fact that just three days before my departure for the States, my phone was stolen out of the truck, taking with it all of my contacts. Years of work were gone in a flash but Moses is diligently working on reconstructing that contact list. In addition to being in churches, we have plans to bring the gospel banner presentation to as many schools as will have us, distributing tracts and New Testaments to each student.

One of our new contacts from last season is Pastor Philip of Tonkalimba in Kambia district. We had a great time with him last season and are looking forward to being with him again later this year and his Christian secondary school of 350 students.

When news of the impending travel restrictions reached us, we were in Kenema with a new contact at a newly planted church, about 5 hours from home. Our remaining meetings in Kenema were cancelled, and we evacuated so as to not be trapped away from home by the travel ban. Being a new church we really regretted having to just drop and run. We will be going back to Pastor Flomo and his group at Kenema Baptist Church early in this upcoming circuit. We expect to hold the teaching planned for last year as well as assisting with more evangelism. Because this is such a young church, we will be covering basic church doctrines. This is a very eager group and we are just as eager to be back with them.

We will also be picking resuming at Grace Baptist Church in Bo with training which had to be suspended. Much of the circuit travel takes me through Bo as we are leaving or returning to Baomahun, so I will be able to fit this teaching into smaller segments. This is an important training venue to maintain as it services several pastors and church leaders from churches in or near Bo. My calls to Pastor Collier of Grace BC indicate that their group is ready to begin training again. Past classes have already covered the books of John, Acts, and Romans. I am planning to cover a survey of the church epistles next.

NEW GROUND: For the past year I have been in communication with Pastor Joah, Refuge Baptist Church, in Monrovia, Liberia. He has invited Moses and me to teach at their annual conference which is attended by several area churches. Prince Nallo, a prominent member of Grace BC in Bo is friends with Pastor Joah, and excitedly recommended that we be included in their conference to provide training in evangelism to these pastors and church leaders. Unfortunately, during a recent call with Pastor Joah, I learned that due to the Covid virus, their conference is canceled this year. This would make an excellent opportunity and I'm prayerful that in the future it will become a regular part of our circuit.

MOVING FORWARD: In early October the Mustard family spent a week in DeLand. It was a joyful reunion and our family enjoyed hosting them for several meals as well as play times for the children. For Brother Mustard and myself it was a busy week of brainstorming and planning a tentative timeline for the next few of years. We really needed to regroup since the pandemic so radically changed our anticipated timeframe for their move and the completion of the church building project. Brother Mustard has shipped three crates containing all of their solar equipment. I will receive these in mid-November. He will then move ahead with the 40-foot shipping container with a February-April anticipated delivery timeframe. Meanwhile, their third child is due in mid-January. Brother Mustard will join me in Sierra Leone in April/May when we will install their updated solar array and prepare the house for a family with toddlers! The family is anticipating arriving all together in June, 2021.

Logistics for erecting the steel church building will be on-going for the next few seasons. Because of the amount of sand and stone we will need for this phase of the project, we will have to make arrangements for it to be purchased and delivered; it is just way too much for me to haul in our little trailer. This means finding a truck and driver willing to attempt the challenges of our road, locating sources for these materials, and preparing the site to receive and securely store the materials. I will also need to arrange for deliveries of bags of cement (remember, no cement trucks!), iron rod, and other bulk building supplies. These logistics can be staggering. This is what pushes out the actual erecting of the building until 2021-22 dry season (late November to mid May). But with God's strength and grace, coupled with your prayer, we will get there!

A lot is beginning to happen again now that life is settling into the "new normal." Thank you for your continued prayers and support which allow us to be your voice in Sierra Leone.

Because He is Worthy
Stephen & Laura Holt

Return Dry Season Visits



Pictured at left is Pastor Phillip (red shirt) and members of his church who participated in the evangelism. Above are the students of the secondary school he runs. We really enjoyed this school as the students were attentive and interactive, responding well to questions.



Left: A primary school group in Kambia District



Above: A mixed group from Bo and Kenema churches ready for evangelism.



Above: Our first Sunday back to church after lifting of restrictions.
Right: Two of our lovely church girls



Family Time



We were thrilled to have some family photos done! We praise the Lord that our family is complete and Jeremy is still with us (right) We managed to have a lot of laughs and a great time during the photo shoot. Thank you *Wittlin Photography* for working so well with us!



I had many opportunities for public ministry with our grand children (Rebekah pictured here).



In September my bride and I celebrated 39 years of abundantly blessed marriage!



A highlight was flying with our grandson Caleb, 10 years old, who is preparing to be a missionary pilot! What a blessing to be so focused for the future at such a young age.

